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The Unexpected Guest

Amos J. Hershey

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226 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia

The Unexpected Guest

A Vaudeville Sketch in One Act

By Amos J. Hershey

PHILADELPHIA
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1912

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CHARACTERS

Mr. Everett Hillard. . . . . *A business man*
Punch. . . . . *The Invention*

Time in Representation : Forty-five Minutes

COSTUMES

Hillard. Business suit, with hat, overcoat and gloves.

Punch. Velvet or satin suit. Knickerbocker pants, blouse waist, large pointed collar-like cape, ornaments on each point, small bishop's sleeves with wide turn-back cuffs, silk hose, slippers, Punch's cap with ornaments. Face made up as a doll, pink cheeks, red lips, etc. Wig.

PROPERTIES

Large box in which Punch is packed like a doll; excelsior and other packing; key, newspapers, letters, plate with apples; light overcoat, hat and gloves; hatchet.

Punch is very changeable, sometimes droll and light-headed, other times serious; sometimes he seems mature, at other times a mere child. He should possess personal interest and charm.

Reserve 15 April 46 Univ. Place. Bishop

THE UNEXPECTED GUEST

Scene,—A nicely furnished Bachelor's apartment, showing sofa, chairs, coat and hat rack, reading table with books, papers, letters, etc.

Entrances,—Center, Right, Left. Window at Right.

(*Enter* HILLARD, *who takes off gloves, throws them on table, takes newspaper out of overcoat pocket, tosses it on table, removes overcoat and hat, hangs them on rack.*)

HILLARD (*sinking wearily into armchair by table*). Oh, but I am tired! Such a day as we have had at the office: why, the work simply piled in. Busy all the time. Didn't even have time to go out for lunch, although I did take about five minutes to go across the street to a restaurant and invest a nickel in a sandwich. Think, (*rubbing stomach*) nothing to eat for ten hours but a measly ham sandwich. (*Looks at watch.*) Only five o'clock, and dinner not until six. By the way, the waiters in these restaurants have to contend with a great deal of kicking. To-day I overheard several complaints which were really amusing. The fellow sitting next to me gave the waiter a polite hint by asking him if he couldn't coax the chicken to wade through the soup once more. The man directly opposite me remarked, in the presence of the waiter, "We are told that the smallest hair throws a shadow. Certainly it does! It throws a shadow over your appetite when you find it in your victuals," and he had it there, too. Just as I was leaving I overheard a newcomer, who had taken a seat inside the door, order some eggs: "How will you

have the eggs cooked?" asked the waiter. "Make any difference in the price of them?" asked the customer cautiously. "No." "Then cook them with a nice slice of ham," he replied, greatly relieved. (*Discovers newspaper on table.*) Well, well, I haven't even glanced at the evening paper yet. (*Picks up paper, glances over headlines: reads.*) "Great Time Among The Sons Of Ireland; Big demonstration to-morrow evening." (*Laughs.*) That reminds me, I was walking along Market Street this morning and saw two Irishmen and an old mule out on the street: each would ride a short distance while the other would follow on foot. Once the Irishman who was on foot got close to the heels of his muleship, when he received a kick on one of his shins. To be revenged, he picked up a stone and hurled it at the mule, but by accident struck his companion on the back of the head. Seeing what he had done he stopped and began to groan and rub his skin. The one on the mule turned and asked, "Phwat's the mather?" "The cratur's kicked me," was the reply. "Be jabers," said the other, "An' he did thot same to me on the back of me head." (*At this time* HILLARD *discovers the box, which is standing upright, rear* R. C. *and is somewhat startled*). Why, for the—well, the idea! what in the world can that be? (*Goes over and examines box*). I do declare, it looks like a coffin. (*Shivers.*) Ough! may be it is! Now who would be wanting to send me anything like that. It might be a joke of Robert's; he is going to a medical school and perhaps he has sent me a skeleton for a joke. He knows how I dislike them. If it is, you won't find me sleeping here to-night. Perhaps they've sent it to the wrong room. No.—(*reads label*). Mr. Everett Hillard. The Wheatland Apartment House, cor. Sixth and Goldsmith Aves., City. That's my name all right, but there's nothing to tell where it came from, nor to give any hint as to what it contains. I know about as little as I did before. I guess the only way to find out is to open it and see. But I don't like to; if it should happen to be—Wait, I forgot to look over my mail; there may be a

letter explaining this mysterious package. (*Sorts letters at table, opens one, reads it.*) Oh, that's just my tailor's bill. Very well! Very well! It will come in handy to-morrow morning to give the maid for kindling the fire. (*Picks up another letter*). Now here's a letter that looks mysterious. (*Breaks seal and reads*). "My dear Everett, I suppose you are somewhat surprised to hear from me, but you know how I hate to write letters, unless I am up to mischief." (*Looks nervously at box.*) Just what I thought. I—I can't stay here with a skeleton (*shivers*) as my only companion. I—I w-wish I—I was out of this. (*Goes toward door, when he sees box he hesitates, goes back, then he goes toward door but backs as before. Repeat business.*) Well, if I can't get away, I suppose the only course left is to finish the letter: no doubt it is explained here. (*reads*). "As you well know, I have always delighted in new inventions (*brightens*) and I am somewhat of an inventor myself. (*Smiles.*) I have just completed my little invention of a most life-like toy which I have named the Funny Punch." (*Laughs.*) It is no skeleton after all, but merely a harmless invention. All my worry and fear and trembling was for naught. (*Continues reading*). "I know you feel somewhat lonely, you old bachelor, living all alone in an apartment house, so I have sent you this little man to enliven your dreary hours. Open the box very carefully, and also be careful when you take Punch out. I am sure you will say it is the most life-like toy you have ever seen. You will find the key in one corner of the box. When you wind him up he will converse with you and seem as if he were a living person. I hope you may find great comfort in him, as I am sure you will. When you are inclined to be moody or a little 'down in the mouth,' just wind up Funny Punch and he will bring the brighter side of life to you. From your old chum Robert." Well, well, how did he know I was feeling blue to-night. I must open this what-you-may-call-it and see what surprise is in store for me. (*Retires, door* R.*; re-enters with hatchet; pries lid off box, removes lid and sets it against wall. In box,* PUNCH *is dis-*

covered, with tissue paper and excelsior packed about him. HILLARD *removes all the packing, lifts* PUNCH *out, stands him on floor, keeping hold of him so he does not fall.* PUNCH *remains stiff and rigid as a wax image. During the above business:*)

HILLARD. Isn't he great! The dear little fellow. No wonder Robert named him Funny Punch; why, it dispels the gloom and brings sunshine just to look at him! Well, young fellow, I guess we can get along together. What jolly evenings we will have, just you and I. Won't we? Now, I must find that key. (*Keeps hold of Punch with one hand, while he procures the key with the other.*) Here is the key, now where is the place to wind him? (*Searches all over Punch.*) Well, I wonder where the place is? Oh, here. No it isn't either. Humph! where can be it? I don't remember whether Robert mentioned that or not. He told where the key was, I know that, but I don't know—well, I will make sure, anyhow, and see. (*Attempts to go over to table, but finds that* PUNCH *will fall if he leaves him. Business here: If* HILLARD *attempts to let go of* PUNCH, PUNCH *appears to fall;* HILLARD *props him up, etc. Repeat business, Then* HILLARD *holds* PUNCH *with one hand while he looks beseechingly at letter on table and beckons for it to come over to him. Finally he carries* PUNCH *over and stands him against table, and while he props him with his knees, he picks up the letter and glances over the contents. He is disheartened.*)

HILLARD. No, not a thing about it. Well, I must find that spot or we cannot become acquainted, can we, old boy? (*Searches again; jumps up and clasps hands.*) Eureka, I've found it. Oh, no you don't. (*Catches* PUNCH *as he is about to fall.*) Now we shall see what good you are. (*Holds* PUNCH *around body with one arm, while he inserts key under collar at back, into a spring so that when wound it clicks loud enough to be heard in audience. He lays key on table, then gazes at* PUNCH, *who does not move.* HILLARD *is disappointed.*) He doesn't move! It's a humbug! It's a shame, that's what it is, that I should

be all worked up with hope and expectation, and then be so disappointed. (*Lets go of* PUNCH.) I don't care if you do fall. (*To* HILLARD'S *surprise*, PUNCH *does not fall, but stands erect.* HILLARD *stands aside and looks on with wonder.* PUNCH *first takes several deep breaths, then stretches his arms, yawns, rubs his eyes, stretches arms again, rubs his eyeballs around and finally exclaims "Ough!" which so startles* HILLARD *that he runs around room to rear of table, where he stands, hands propped on table, staring at* PUNCH. PUNCH, *meanwhile, glances slowly all over audience, and then about on stage. He discovers* HILLARD, *surveys him from head to foot, then bursts into derisive laughter.*

PUNCH (*laughing*). What are you?

HILLARD (*coming from behind table*). What am I? I suppose you mean, who am I?

PUNCH. Well, what kind of thing are you, anyhow?

HILLARD (*indignantly*). Thing? I am a gentleman!

PUNCH (*pondering*). Gentleman! gentleman! I guess that's the same as man, isn't it?

HILLARD. Yes. Sometimes.

PUNCH. Well, you are certainly a funny-looking man.

HILLARD (*vexed*). Not any funnier than you are. Why, I should like to know, am I any funnier than other men?

PUNCH (*wonderingly*). Other men? Are there other men?

HILLARD (*smiling*). Certainly.

PUNCH. That's odd. I never saw any other man except you, and the fellow who made me and packed me in that box and sent me here.

HILLARD. Why, you were only finished yesterday and sent direct to me, so you see you have not had much chance to meet other men.

PUNCH (*spies a plate of fruit on table*). Oh! These am what?

HILLARD. I think you are talking backward this evening. You should say, what are these? Those are apples.

PUNCH. Apples? What are they for? Are they good to eat?

HILLARD. Most assuredly.

PUNCH. May I have one?

HILLARD. Now your English is better. Yes, you may have one.

PUNCH (*bites into apple*). Um! Um! That's good.

HILLARD. Is that the first one you have ever eaten? Oh yes, I forgot that you were only made yesterday.

PUNCH (*sits on sofa, finds it springy, jumps up and down on it*). Say, isn't this nice! Regular Jumping Jack; or rather, Jumping Punch, eh, (*takes a big bite from apple and stuffs into mouth.*)

HILLARD (*looking horrified at* PUNCH). Why, Punch, I am surprised!

PUNCH. I ain't.

HILLARD. Don't you know, Punch, that it is very unmannerly to fill your mouth in that way?

PUNCH. And don't you know that it is very unmannerly to stare at your guests while they are eating?—Say?

HILLARD. Well?

PUNCH. If I'd been born twins, what would my other name be?

HILLARD. I think you are asking simple questions!

PUNCH. Well, anyhow, I do just wish I was twins.

HILLARD. Why?

PUNCH. 'Cause, then I'd be able to send one-half of me to school while the other half could play hookey and go fishing or to the ball game.

HILLARD (*laughing*). Well, you have bright ideas, you have, for such a little man.

PUNCH. Oh, I don't know; I'm older than I look, even if I was just finished yesterday. Did you ever hear the story of the peacock?

HILLARD. No.

PUNCH. It's a beautiful tail. (*tale*). Say, did you ever play the races?

HILLARD. What do you mean?

PUNCH. Get next, won't you! I mean did you ever bet on a horse?

HILLARD. No, I never did.

PUNCH. Are you interested in them?

HILLARD. Not very: why?

PUNCH. I know a man who made a lot of money following the horses.

HILLARD. And who was he?

PUNCH. The stage-driver.

HILLARD. Well! Speaking of animals, that reminds me, I read in the paper that there's a law against keeping pigs and cows inside the city limits. They are very strict about it, I am told.

PUNCH. Yes, I read of a man last week who was arrested for keeping two fine Alderney cows.

HILLARD. Indeed?

PUNCH. It's a fact. They didn't belong to him. By the way, do you know, my father is a grocer; and do you know what he weighs?

HILLARD. No, having never seen your father I could not guess what he weighs. What does your father weigh?

PUNCH. Oh, sugar, cheese, crackers, etc.

HILLARD. Well you are a wonder.

PUNCH. But do you know my father can't weigh eels with scales?

HILLARD. He can't? Why not?

PUNCH. Because eels have no scales. Say, do you know I have a very interesting history?

HILLARD. Indeed?

PUNCH. Yes, I bought it down at the book store.

HILLARD. I have a brother that works in a book store. But my brother just told me this morning that he walks in his sleep.

PUNCH. I wish my brother could, he'd be on the police force yet. How is your brother?

HILLARD. Why, brother has been away for three years.

PUNCH. Yes, I was there. I thought he would get nine.

HILLARD (*proudly*). Well, my brother is smart.

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PUNCH. You bet he is. I didn't think they would catch him.

HILLARD (*impatiently*). Well, you never mind my brother.

PUNCH (*sneeringly*). I don't have to. There's men paid for minding him. You know my sister, don't you?

HILLARD. Why, I didn't know you had a sister?

PUNCH. Yes, and she has a little girl.

HILLARD. She has?

PUNCH. It's a fact! She's the bouncing mother of a proud girl.

HILLARD. Ha! ha! ha!

PUNCH. What are you laughing at?

HILLARD. Why, that's not right. You should have said, 'She's the proud mother of a bouncing girl:' although that phrase is not applied to girls, but generally to boy babies.

PUNCH. Oh, I don't know; girls can be just as bouncy as boys, although the boys do get the bounce from their best girls now and then. But about girls being bouncy! Did you ever attend any of these afternoon teas, where the ladies are generally in the majority, and we poor men (*coughs*) are awfully in the minority? This is the way one of those youthful maids of forty years of age, more or less, comes bouncing across the room to greet you. (*Imitates a lady with a bouncy walk at a reception going around greeting her friends*). 'Why, how do you do, Mr. Haswell, I am awfully glad to see you, and how is Mr. Percy? Oh, there is Florence Nighter. (*Nods to imaginary person*). Pray excuse me, Mr. Haswell.' (*Greeting* FLORENCE *with a kiss*). 'Oh, you dear girl, where have you been, I have been looking for you ever since I came? What do you think of Mrs. Mason's gown, isn't it just charming?—Yes.—Did you see May Waller? No? She's right over there. Isn't she powdered and painted something awful? Here comes that disagreeable Mame Rekan; doesn't her dress set something horrid, and the way she has her hair fixed!—Why, how do you do, Miss Rekan; Florence and I were just remarking how well you looked this after-

noon, and how well your dress becomes you.—What did you say, Mrs. Van Okram? (*Turning to the hostess*). Yes, I had a delightful time, thank you.—Well I will have to bid you good-afternoon, I notice the others are leaving. Good bye, Florence.' Don't try to tell me girls are not bouncy. But about that baby: they say it looks like me.

HILLARD (*jokingly*). Then kill her.

PUNCH. Mercy, why?

HILLARD. Better slaughter it than condemn it to a life of sorrow.

PUNCH. Sir-r-r-r! How dare you insult me that way! Take that, and that, and that. (*Slapping* HILLARD *on the face*).

HILLARD. Hold on! That's my face.

PUNCH. The idea of you insulting me to my face behind my back! (*Goes to other side of stage and pouts*).

HILLARD (*coaxingly*). Come now, cheer up.

PUNCH. I've a great big notion to go right back in my box.

HILLARD. O, don't. Come, tell me more about your little niece.

PUNCH (*brightening*). You mean that dear, sweet little thing?

HILLARD. Yes.

PUNCH. Well you know that she is the only children Sara has.

HILLARD. Child, you mean.

PUNCH. No, she isn't a child. I said she was a girl.

HILLARD. Well, go on.

PUNCH. She is the dearest little thing, and what do you think her name is?

HILLARD. Mary?

PUNCH. No.

HILLARD. Susan?

PUNCH. No!!

HILLARD. Sarah?

PUNCH. No!!!

HILLARD. Well, what is her name?

PUNCH. Oleo Margery. Don't you think it's pretty?

HILLARD. Why no, I can't say that I do. It sounds too much like oleomargarine.

PUNCH. Well, they haven't any but her. (*Walks over to window; suddenly throws up his hands in horror*). Oh! There's a man dropped one hundred feet out of the window!

HILLARD (*excited, runs to window.*) Mercy! Did it kill him?

PUNCH (*walking calmly away.*) No, they were pigs' feet!

HILLARD. (*disgusted*), Now, you're smart, aren't you?

PUNCH. Certainly, and I am awful strong too, even if I am little.

HILLARD. Well, what feat of strength can you boast of?

PUNCH. Why, I get in a boat every morning and pull up the river.

HILLARD (*in mock amazement*). Wonderful! Amazing!

PUNCH. Yes, but that isn't all.

HILLARD. Well, what now?

PUNCH. I got up this morning, took an axe and chopped a tree down, then I took another axe and chopped it up.

HILLARD. That was very good work for a little man like you.

PUNCH. Yes? (*Weeps.*)

HILLARD. Why are you weeping, Punch, why those bitter tears?

PUNCH. I just heard yesterday that the good die young, and I am so blamed good.

HILLARD. Don't cry, you have no cause to worry.

PUNCH. Think not? Say, did you know that I owned a gun once?

HILLARD. A little boy like you own a gun! The idea!

PUNCH (*proudly*). Yes, I owned a gun, and a good gun, too! And you ought to have seen the way that gun could shoot. It would shoot so far that you couldn't tell where the bullet would land!

HILLARD. Impossible!

PUNCH. It's a fact. I'll tell you what I did; just to prove to you its force. When I bought that gun I loaded it and went out to try it. I didn't have any particular target to shoot at, so I shot straight up in the air. I waited for the ball to come down, but I didn't see it. But what do you think? After awhile, a chunk of ice came down.

HILLARD. Ice? In summer time?

PUNCH. Yes, sir, a piece of real ice! I couldn't imagine from where it came, but I took it home and put it into the refrigerator. When the ice was melted, what do you think I found?

HILLARD. I couldn't imagine.

PUNCH. Why, that bullet was lying in the icebox!

HILLARD. How did it come there?

PUNCH. Well, I was telling you the force of that gun, and I suppose the bullet went so far up that it froze into a cake of ice.

HILLARD (*disgusted*). Well, that is a big one!

PUNCH. Sure, it was a big one, it lasted for several days, and a few over. And what do you think? That excellent gun of mine went off one night and it wasn't loaded.

HILLARD. Amazing! How was that?

PUNCH. A thief carried it off. Did you know that there was a big explosion down town to-day?

HILLARD. No, I didn't hear of it: what was it?

PUNCH. The wind blew up Market Street! That reminds me,—You know my brother-in-law? Well, he attempted to beat his wife last night, and two policemen rushed in just in time to prevent murder.

HILLARD. Horrible! Did they take him to jail?

PUNCH. No, to the hospital.

HILLARD. Do you know, that brother-in-law of yours is liable to get himself into trouble!

PUNCH. I think he did get into it: with both feet, too.

HILLARD. No! I mean other trouble.

PUNCH. Well, what has he been doing now?

HILLARD. He is going around telling lies about me.

PUNCH. As long as he tells lies, what need you care? But if he begins to tell the truth, I would break his jaw. My brother-in-law had over fifty thousand men under him.

HILLARD. Why, I never knew that he was a General!

PUNCH. He isn't: he was up in an airship. Now I want to ask you a serious question.

HILLARD. I didn't know you could be serious. Well what is it?

PUNCH. If I should eat a lot of—of—of, what are those things with the long thin seeds in?

HILLARD. Long thin seeds? (*Thinks*). Oh, you mean dates.

PUNCH. Yes, if I should eat a lot of dates, would I become a calendar?

HILLARD. Such a foolish question!

PUNCH. Say, am I really, truly made of dust. I heard Robert say so.

HILLARD. I suppose so. Why?

PUNCH. Then why don't I get muddy when you wash me?

HILLARD. You are rather childish, are you not?

PUNCH. Oh, you know I'm changeable.

HILLARD. I should think you are, the way that you have been acting this evening.

PUNCH. Do you know, my aunt that lives out in the country, has a cow that gives buttermilk?

HILLARD. Get out, that's impossible.

PUNCH. What else can a cow give but-her-milk? (*Laughs.*) I saw the funniest thing down town to-day. I saw a horse running away and a little dog sitting on his tail.

HILLARD. Punch, that is impossible!

PUNCH. Not a bit of it. The horse was running down the street, and the dog was sitting on his own tail. (*Spies newspaper*). Is that the Evening Bulletin?

HILLARD. Yes, but you can't read.

PUNCH. Well I guess I can. (*Picks up paper, goes to sofa, sits and reads*). "Big Fire In Eastern District," "Husband Commits Suicide," poor fellow. Oh, here it says, "Miss Mary Cute, while eating lunch at a restaurant got a pearl out of an oyster." Um, that's nothing!

HILLARD. It isn't?

PUNCH. No! My sister got a diamond necklace out of a lobster. (*Reads.*) "A Galveston young lady has sued a man for attempting to kiss her against her will instead of against her cheek." She's all right, she is. Here's a fellow writes: "To the Editor of the Bulletin :— Is there anything more h-a-r-r-o-w-i-n-g," what does that spell?

HILLARD. Harrowing.

PUNCH (*reads*). "Is there anything more harrowing to the soul, than a peg in one's shoe?" I wonder what the answer is? I give that riddle up. Say, that reminds me: Did you ever hear that great preacher discourse about the soul?

HILLARD. No. What did he say?

PUNCH. He said, "The soul is a prisoner that always kills its's jailer when it makes its escape."

HILLARD. Indeed, that is a very beautiful thought. And do you know who the jailer is?

PUNCH. I suppose it is the thread that the shoe is sewed with. (*Continues reading.*) "A Philadelphia young lady tried to be aristocratic when she got on a Baring Street car this morning, and did not look at the money which she gave the conductor; but he very meekly gave back the lozenge on which was written, "I'll never cease to love thee," and said, he was an orphan with six little brothers to support and must be excused." Ha! ha! ha! I bet you she felt cheap. "Horse thieves are serenaded in Texas by string bands." "Samuel Zoner, of 331 Baker Street, broke a chair over his wife's head yesterday, and was immediately taken to the station house, where he will be kept until this morning, when he comes before the court. While locked up, his pastor visited him and undertook to talk with him. Zoner dis-

played a good deal of penitence. He said, he was very sorry he had permitted his anger to obtain the mastery of him, and to suffer him to do such an act, because it was a good chair, one of those old-fashioned colonial chairs, which was an heirloom in his family and he knew he could never replace it!" Well, did you ever! He loved his wife, didn't he! "Now is the time to reduce rents —by sewing them up." Here's another fellow that writes, "To the Editor of the Bulletin:—Is stealing a march worse than taking a walk?" O, how funny? (*Starts laughing and continues laughing*).

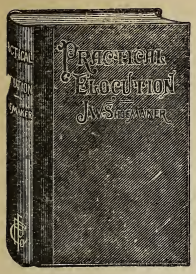
HILLARD. For goodness sake, Punch, stop laughing.

PUNCH. Oh, it's so funny, I can't help it! (*Continues laughing but finally ends in a squawk; paper falls from his fingers, and* PUNCH *is perfectly still*).

HILLARD (*startled*). Punch! Punch!! Why, the poor fellow has run down. Well, I thought he wouldn't last much longer, without rewinding. (*Glances at watch. In surprise*). Well, it's nearly six o'clock, and I am not dressed for dinner. (*Gathers up letters*). I must hurry or I will be late. Doubtless he will be all right where he is until later. Poor little fellow, he has certainly been a jolly companion this last half hour. (*Goes over to* PUNCH *picks him up and places him in corner*). Well, good-bye, Punch, until our next meeting. Good-bye, Good-bye. (*Exit door right.*)

CURTAIN

Practical Elocution



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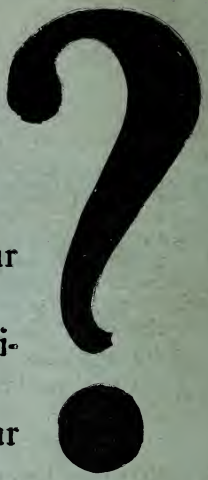

A CATALOGUE GIVING FULL INFORMATION AS TO HOW ANY OF THESE ACCOMPLISHMENTS MAY BE ATTAINED WILL BE SENT FREE ON REQUEST

The National School of Elocution and Oratory

Temple Building **Philadelphia**